

Remarks

The Office Action of August 23, 2005, has been carefully reviewed and considered. Applicants acknowledge (a) the objection to the Abstract; (b) the objection to the drawings/specification regarding lack of description of reference elements 162, 164, and (c) the rejection of Claim 1 under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) over Obu et al.

In order to advance prosecution of this application towards Issuance as a patent with Claim 1 and new claims 2-10, Applicants have amended Claim 1, and added claims 2-10 in order to more clearly and fully claim what Applicant's regard as their invention.

As disclosed and now clearly described and claimed, Applicants' disclosure is directed to a reduced footprint image producing machine that includes (a) image forming apparatus, controllers and machine environment conditioning devices; (b) a first frame standing on a floor on casters containing image forming apparatus and having a height suitable for an operator work surface located at the top of the first frame; and (c) a second frame mounted on the top of the first frame adjoining the operator work surface and defining a footprint-reducing tower containing machine environment conditioning devices, thereby preventing the addition of protrusions to a rear of the first frame of the machine, and thus reducing the installed foot print of the machine.

Amended Claim 1, and added new dependent Claims 2-10 are clearly directed to various aspects of Applicants' reduced footprint image producing machine as such.

In the Office action, the examiner rejected independent Claim 1 under 35 USC 102(b) over Obu et al., particularly FIG. 22 thereof. Obu et al particularly in FIG. 22, disclose an "image forming apparatus having a common sheet processing station 130 with a sheet supply unit 6, at least one image forming unit 150 which is detachably arranged with the common sheet processing station 130. The image forming unit 150 forms images on a sheet carried from the common sheet processing station 130 via a sheet carrying path.

Many different image forming units 150 may be utilized with the common sheet processing station 130."

Obu et al further allude in their FIGS. 3(a), 3(b) and 13(a), 13(b) to reduced footprints of a couple of embodiments of their image forming apparatus or machine, but do not detail how that is achieved. There can of course be hundreds of ways and concepts for attempting to achieve such reductions in foot print.

Applicants' concept and motivation as disclosed and described is directed to a machine that has a simple up and down and clean rear or backside, and that can be installed with safe walk areas to the front and rear of it, as well as to a machine that has its service connections (controllers and environmental conditioning devices) on top of the machine, thus enabling an easier service access by technicians.

It is clear however, that Obu et al do not teach or clearly suggest an image producing machine that includes (a) *a first frame standing on a floor on casters containing image forming apparatus and having a height suitable for an operator work surface located at the top of the first frame*; and (b) *a second frame mounted on the top of the first frame adjoining the operator work surface and defining a footprint-reducing tower containing machine environment conditioning devices*. (emphasis added).

An operator work surface as is well understood in the art is typically a flat surface on which an operator can lay sets of sheets for arrangement, unstapling or stapling. Machine environment conditioning devices or NOHAD (Noise, Heat, Air and Dirt) devices as are well known in the art include exhaust fans, filters, and the like separate from machine component specific conditioning devices.

In Obu et al, unlike Applicants' disclosure, (i) image forming apparatus are contained in the unit 150 that is detachably insertable to some crevice within the floor standing sheet processing station 130, (ii) the second frame 150 does not adjoin an operator work area as that is understood in the art,

and (iii) there is no disclosure of machine environment conditioning devices as those are also understood in the art.

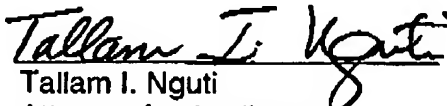
Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that Applicants' independent Claim 1 as amended, and new dependent Claims 2-10 which are clearly directed to Applicants' machine as such, are patentable under 35 USC 102(b) over the teachings and suggestions of Obu et al.

Reconsideration and allowance of the application with amended Claim 1 and new dependent Claims 2-10 are therefore respectfully requested.

No additional fee is believed to be required for this amendment. However, the undersigned Xerox Corporation attorney hereby authorizes the charging of any necessary fees, other than the issue fee, to Xerox Corporation Deposit Account No. 24-0025. This also constitutes a request for any needed extension of time and authorization to charge all fees therefore to Xerox Corporation Deposit Account No. 24-0025.

A telephone interview is respectfully requested at the number listed below prior to any further Office Action, i.e., if the Examiner has any remaining questions or issues to address after this paper. The undersigned will be happy to discuss any further Examiner-proposed amendments as may be appropriate.

Respectfully submitted,


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